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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001172

SENSITIVE  
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NSC FOR MGA VIN, LETIM  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: OUTLOOK NOT GOOD FOR DARFUR ELECTIONS

Classified By: CDA Robert E. Whitehead for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: During meetings with political party and civil society leaders in Darfur from October 9-12, poloff found that participation of opposition parties in elections is unlikely given the lack of political space, security concerns and the lack of a comprehensive peace in Darfur. Some rebel groups have been denied permission to register as political parties, resulting in frustration and threats by the groups to disrupt the election process. Due to rumors alleging cooperation between the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the Government of Sudan (GOS), UNAMID is increasingly perceived by many Darfuris as allied with the government. As political space has tightened, more arrests have occurred, and some opposition parties have been driven underground. Conditions are ripe for an elections-related crisis in Darfur that would undermine the legitimacy of the electoral process there. END SUMMARY.

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LITTLE POLITICAL PARTY PARTICIPATION  
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¶2. (C) On October 11 and 12, poloff met in El Fasher with representatives of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), SPLM- Democratic Change, Umma Party, Popular Congress Party (PCP), and Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minnawi (SLM/MM). All party representatives emphasized that their participation in the April 2010 election in Darfur is unlikely given the current security situation and the lack of a comprehensive Darfur peace. Parties were pessimistic that the election in Darfur would take place, and told poloff that a free and fair election in Darfur will not happen. Civil society leaders echoed the political parties' message regarding election participation. Abdul Jabbar Fadul, a professor at El Fasher University, stated: "Elections are not a priority now; we need peace and security before elections."

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REBEL GROUPS DENIED RIGHT TO REGISTER AS PARTIES  
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¶3. (C) According to political party organizers in El Fasher, a number of political parties have not been able to register as they are considered armed movements by the Government of Sudan (GoS). Dr. Ismail Hussein Hashim, North Darfur Minister of Social Affairs and a leading member of SLM/MM stated that the Political Party Affairs Council denied the right to register as political parties to SLM/MM, Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), among other "rebel groups." Hashim remarked "If we are not able to participate in the election,

what motivation do we have to allow it to take place?" Hashim indicated that if the election goes ahead without rebel group participation, the groups may attempt to disrupt elections.

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IDPS DISENFRANCHIZED  
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14. (C) On October 9, poloff met with Abdalla Hussein Daleel and Is'hag Ahmed Mekki, IDP leaders at Al Salam Camp outside of El Fasher. Daleel and Mekki stated that IDPs in Al Salam, Abu Shouk and Zam Zam IDP camps completely reject the election. According to Daleel and Mekki, IDP leaders want peace and security before elections can be held. Daleel asked, "Why would we participate in an exercise that legitimates our oppressor, the Government of Sudan?". IDPs will not be registering to vote either, a prospect that concerns election advisors as it will prevent IDPs from voting if a resolution to the Darfur crisis is reached before the elections. The numbers of incidents of harassment and intimidation in the IDP camps continues to rise, Mekki stated. Daleel alleged that sheiks in the camps had been given 5,000 Sudanese Pounds (approximately 2,400 U.S. Dollars) to recruit voters for the NCP. Daleel and Mekki also alleged that National Intelligence and Security Service Agents (NISS) agents actively pursue, capture, and torture any camp members perceived to be politically active. The thirteen Abu Shouk IDP leaders, all detained following the recent murder of a pro-NCP sheik, were told they will not be released until after the election, according to Mekki and confirmed to poloff by the detainees' lawyer, Ismail Katio.

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UNAMID NEUTRALITY QUESTIONED  
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15. (C) According to IDP leaders, civil society members and opposition party representatives, UNAMID is no longer perceived as a neutral peacekeeping mission. Instead, they told poloff, UNAMID is increasingly seen as allied with the GoS. According to Dr. Ismail Hussein Hashim, North Darfur Minister of Social Affairs and a leading member of SLM/MM, UNAMID recently provided airplane and helicopter support for Presidential Advisor Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie. Hashim traveled with Nafie's delegation within North Darfur for a series of meetings, and observed that at every stop, Nafie campaigned for the NCP. According to Hashim, UNAMID provided over 18 helicopter trips for Nafie. In another case, NCP officials were purportedly transported by UN vehicles to a rally. While poloff has been unable to confirm these allegations, the public perception that UNAMID is allied with the government is clearly a concern among IDP leaders, political party leaders and civil society representatives.

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POLITICAL SPACE TIGHTENING  
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16. (C) According to Ismail Katio, Chairman of the Darfur Democratic Forum and a senior member of the Umma party, political space is tightening in Darfur as the election approaches. Representatives of the Umma Party, Communist Party, and Popular Congress Party all stated that they are unable to operate or campaign for fear of arrest and detainment. Katio was recently released from a two month stay in jail where he was held for his political activism. In addition, all political party representatives and civil society members detailed numerous instances of unfair practices they said the NCP is using to recruit and register voters. Alleged grievances include:  
--NCP party representatives "registering" voters door to door  
--The NCP hosting picnic lunches with secondary students and promising them entrance to university for help in recruiting NCP members and voters

--The Ministry of Education requiring school head masters to recruit NCP supporters  
--The bribing of community leaders to recruit voters and register voters  
--Increasing NISS intimidation and arrests of political activists

17. (C) COMMENT: The outlook for a successful election in Darfur is not good given the current security situation, barriers to participation by major rebel and IDP groups, and tightening of political space. With avenues for participation in the political process foreclosed, and the perception that UNAMID has been compromised prevalent, the conditions are ripe for an elections-related crisis in Darfur that would undermine the legitimacy of the political process there.

WHITEHEAD